

Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

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Commissioner James W. Etter
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple Street, B-50
Los Angeles, CA 90012

January 3, 2013

Dear Commissioner Etter:

On behalf of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc., I cordially invite you to join us at our Thirty-eighth Annual General Meeting and Banquet on Saturday, January 26, 2013 at the Palmdale Hotel, 300 W. Palmdale Blvd., Palmdale, California 93551 (661-273-1200). The Annual Meeting will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and will feature a review of the Committee's ongoing programs and plans for 2013. Speakers from a variety of agencies will give updates on important activities throughout southern California. The evening activities will include a no-host cocktail hour and mixer at 5:00 p.m. and a banquet beginning at 6:00 p.m.

The year 2012 has been one of especially good news for the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. (DTPC Inc.) and for the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA). We are fortunate to have two speakers for the Saturday night banquet sharing this good news and new field data collected in 2011 and 2012. Under the direction of Preserve Manager Mary Kotschwar Logan, a study of Mohave ground squirrel occupancy of habitat was conducted within the fenced portion of the DTRNA, as well as in the eastern expansion lands. Using camera traps and new methods adapted for the research needs of the DTPC Inc., we obtained thousands of digital images of desert animals, including the Mohave ground squirrel. Mary will present the findings and share a collection of the photographs in her presentation titled, "Caught on Camera."

Dr. Kristin Berry will present the results of two research projects undertaken in 2011 and 2012. The first project compared the results of three different types of land management on desert tortoises and their habitats. Dr. Berry and her collaborators (Lisa Lyren, Tracy Bailey) found that the DTRNA had significantly higher tortoise densities than private lands adjacent to the DTRNA or critical habitat on public lands in the Rand Mountains and Fremont Valley. Dr. Berry will share data to support why tortoise densities differ and what can be done about it. In addition, during 2012, Dr. Berry and the U.S. Geological Survey partnered with the DTPC Inc. to conduct a survey on a long-term study plot centered on the interpretive center at the Natural Area. This plot was first surveyed in 1979 and has been re-surveyed several times since, the last time being 10 years ago. The findings this year put a smile on all our faces—for the first time, the numbers were not on a decline. Substantially more tortoises were found on this large plot than in 2002! Good news indeed, just what we all need to hear, especially after all the efforts undertaken with our partners. Please join us to hear more about these studies.

We hope to see you at the meeting and banquet in January. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, please call (951) 683-3872 or e-mail dtpc@pacbell.net.

Sincerely,

Mark Bratton

Mark Bratton
President of the Board of Directors
Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.